DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 259 747 IR 051 192

TITLE	IBE Activities in the Field of Educational Documentation and Information: Its Present Situation and Future Development.
INSTITUTION	International Bureau of Education, Geneva (Switzerland).
REPORT NO	UNESCO/BIE/DOCINF/3
PUB DATE	Apr 85
NOTE	15p.; Paper presented at the Meeting of Experts in Educational Documentation and Information (Geneva, Switzerland, May 20-24, 1985). For related documents, see IR 051 190-196.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Developed Nations; Developing Nations; *Information Networks; *Information Systems; *International Organizations; *International Programs; *Policy; *Program Implementation
IDENTIFIERS	Educational Information; *International Network Educational Information

ABSTRACT

This working paper briefly reviews the history of the information activities of the International Bureau of Education (IBE) from its first consultative meeting in 1971 to the adoption in 1977 of Recommendation 71, which calls for the development of a worldwide information network in education based on the active participation of regional and national institutions and programs. A brief description is given of the first phase of the development of the International Network for Educational Information (INED), which included the identification of 86 national institutions willing to cooperate in network activities, and a query of those institutions to determine how they envisage the future of the network, their needs in relation to educational information, and how they see the development of their participation in INED activities. The remainder of the paper reports on documentation resources, including databases built by IBE; Documentation Centre personnel and material resources; standardization; and IBE information services and their users. A discussion of past experience as it relates to the guidelines established by Recommendation 71 and some questions for participants designed to obtain direction for future implementation of the project conclude the report. (BBM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED259747

Distribution: limited

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

UNESCO/BIE/DOCINF/3
Geneva, April 1985
Original: English

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION

MEETING OF EXPERTS IN EDUCATIONAL
DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION

International Conference Center
Geneva, 20-24 May 1985

IBE ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION: ITS PRESENT SITUATION AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

IR051192

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Suzanne Adlung

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Reproduced by permission of

Unesco

A - INTRODUCTION

1. The utilization of participative and co-operative principles for the improvement of educational information services started to take shape at the IBE in 1971, when the Bureau organized a first consultative meeting which gathered 'a small group of specialists for the purpose of advising the Bureau on the development of the Co-operative Educational Abstracting Service and related activities' (*). In the document presented to this meeting the development of a worldwide network for the dissemination of educational information based on national institutions is already mentioned as one of the IBE long-term objectives. The group, composed of specialists from different regions of the world, from the Unesco Regional Offices for Education and from Unesco Headquarters, met again in 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975 and played an oustanding role in setting up guidelines for the IBE's work in educational information.

2. As a follow-up to the suggestions and recommendations made by this group, several initiatives were taken by the IBE in the period between 1971 and 1975, such as the publication of an acquisition list, a newsletter and directories of educational institutions, the development of a thesaurus, the introduction of computer techniques in the Documentation Centre, and the creation of a computerized data base. During the same period efforts were made to encourage Member States to participate in the activities developed by the Bureau and many new contacts were established. However, by 1975 this participation was far from being widespread owing to a general lack of national infrastructures to undertake educational documentation activities within countries.

3. This point was raised during one of the meetings of the IBE Council, which considered that it deserved more thorough discussion. Thus, the Council proposed that the improvement of educational documentation and information should be debated as the special theme at the following session of the International Conference on Education. The theme was formulated as follows:

> "The problem of information at the national and international level which is posed by the improvement of educational systems".

The discussion at the 36th session of the International Conference on Education, held in Geneva, 30 August-8 September 1977, resulted in the adoption of Recommendation 71.

(*) IBE Working paper for the Meeting of the Steering Committee on Educational Documentation and Abstracting Service, Geneva, 14-18 June 1971.

B - RECOMMENDATION 71 AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

4. Paragraph 24 (a) of this Recommendation states that:

> "Unesco, particularly through IBE and in close collaboration with other international agencies and organizations, should undertake: the systematic planning, costing and development of a world-wide information network in education based on the active participation of regional and national institutions and programmes and including an assessment of the resources available and a time scale showing intermediate objectives."

The first phase of this operation was the identification of national institutions which, with the support of their governments, were willing to co-operate in the network activities. Following a request addressed to all Unesco Member States by the Director of the IBE, eighty-six positive replies have already been received which may be considered a very encouraging result.

This positive attitude of Member States corresponds to paragraph 5 (c) of Recommendation 71, which says: "In drawing up a plan and programme of action leading gradually to the development of an educational information system, education authorities should ... where national conditions this, identify a single national centre to serve as the focal point both for the national educational information network and for international contacts and exchanges in this area".

The aims of Recommendation 71 include the improvement of information exchange in the field of education amongst Unesco Member States. For this purpose the IBE has taken the initiative of launching a programme for the publication of reference works to facilitate and encourage direct exchanges between specialists and institutions. A good example is the Directory of educational research institutions, which gives such information as the type and subjects of research projects undertaken by these institutions. Reference tools are also very helpful in the regular exchange work of documentalists and librarians. Regarding the participation of Member States in the implementation of Recommendation 71, IBE has addressed to the eighty-six agencies designated by Member States to be INED focal points a request for contributions in the form of relevant documents in the field of educational policy. These documents have been entered into the IBE data base IBEDOC, for the benefit of all its users.

5. It was not easy to take a decision regarding the next measures to develop the Network, because of the difference of levels amongst the participating institutions. For this reason, the IBE decided to make an inquiry and present to them the following questions: how they envisage the future of the Network; what are their needs in relation to educational information and how they see the development of their participation in INED activities. A copy of the questionnaire and a summary of the answers received at the IBE until the end of last year will be distributed separately.

C - THE PRESENT SITUATION OF DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION SERVICES AT IBE

IBE Documentation resources

6. The IBE Documentation Centre has a collection of about 80.000 books and documents and receives 1.200 periodicals. The collection also includes complete sets of ERIC (1), REDUC (2) and IBE microfiches (280.000), an audiovisual section (300 items including films, video cassettes, slide-tape programmes and cassettes). In 1975, a computerized data base (IBEDOC) containing information on educational innovations was started, to be utilized particularly in the preparation of a periodical annotated bibliography AWARENESS LIST, in the context of the IBE project "International Educational Reporting Service (IERS)". Published at first six times a year, and later four times, this bibliography has added to the richness of the IBE data base, especially with regard to the different aspects of nonformal education. Another component of the data base, started in 1975, includes documents prepared for the International Conference on Education sessions dealing mostly with educational policy. It was only in 1980 that the computer processing of the Documentation Centre's new acquisitions started, enabling them to be included in the data base. This was the departure for the preparation of the Documentation Centre catalogue in the form of a bi-annual publication, thus giving the IBE the possibility of placing its catalogue in libraries all over the world. Moreover, in 1983 the IBE acquired a photocomposition programme which permitted the printing of the catalogue directly from the computer, thus cutting down costs and the time for its preparation. At present, the data base IBEDOC contains about 10,000 records mostly related to comparative education, educational policies and innovations. Lately, it has improved its contents in the field of in-service teacher training thanks to a co-operative project to analyse literature on this subject, established between the IBE, the European Information Centre of the Charles University for Further Education of Teachers in Prague and the Unesco Education Sector. The IBEDOC data base may be accessed on-line in Geneva and is being utilized by the IBE to answer requests for information coming from all over the world. Hopefully, it will be accessible on-line internationally in the near future.

7. Two other data bases have been built up by the IBE: the first, IBETERM, contains the descriptors for the Thesaurus in three languages, English, French and Spanish. With 12,000 records, this data base was also used last year for the input of terminology in the field of science and technology education. The second data base, IBECENT, stores information on educational institutions and has been used to produce the following directories:

- Directory of educational documentation and information services, 4th ed.
- Directory of adult education documentation and information services, 3rd ed.

---

(1) ERIC: Educational Resources Information Center

(2) REDUC: Red Latinoamericana de Información y Documentación en Educación

- Directory of educational research institutions, 2nd ed.

- Directory of special education institutions.

Other reference tools have been produced from the first data base mentioned IBEDOC: (1) Current bibliographical sources in education, a bibliography of bibliographies listing all the current bibliographies, indexes, abstracting journals, in the field of education around the world; (2) List of periodicals: current holdings in the IBE Documentation Centre. About 1,200 periodicals are received in IBE, and we try particularly to keep track of periodical publications issued in developing countries.

In this chapter on reference tools prepared with computer assistance we would like to mention that since the end of last year, in co-operation with the Unesco Division of Structures, Contents, Methods and Techniques of Education, we have started a current register of studies in the field of education prepared by the Unesco Education Sector, its regional offices and other Unesco educational agencies. It is important to call attention to the fact that all the publications prepared from materials in the data bases are of a recurrent nature, thus implying a great amount of work every time they are updated.

The IBE Bulletin is a bibliographical work produced quarterly. Each issue treats a specific subject which is updated at intervals of four to five years, according to the timeliness or the topicality. We also produce materials for a newsletter, a section of which is dedicated to events related to educational documentation and information.

Finally, the IBE maintains a small project, the "Co-operative Educational Abstracting Service (CEAS)", whose main purpose is to help users to overcome language barriers, that is, the length of the abstracts prepared for the project has been calculated so that the user, in most cases, will not need to refer to the original document which, even if written in a language accessible to the user, may not be available for acquisition. The CEAS abstracts are published in two languages, English and French. The CEAS is a highly decentralized operation, since it is the institutions designated in various countries which are responsible for selecting and abstracting the documents. The choice of the participants is based on the accessibility of their languages for the international user. Until now, the Scandinavian countries, Eastern Europe, China, Japan and Israel (for documents issued in Hebrew) have been included. The selection of documents for the project should take into consideration their relevance to the field of educational policy.

For several years now, the IBE has been collecting AV materials including 16 mm films, video-cassettes, slide-tape presentations, etc., on educational projects, programmes, services and systems. This material is processed by the Documentation Centre which maintains a catalogue by subject, country and type of material.

IBE Documentation Centre personnel and material resources

The IBE moved into a new building in June 1984; thus, the Documentation and Information Unit, including the Documentation Centre is now installed in premises suited to its particular requirements. The metal shelves for books and compactus shelves for periodicals have now been extended throughout the whole Library, and the space foreseen for shelving books and periodicals is believed to be sufficient for the next ten years.

Special accommodation has been given to the microfiche collection which now amounts to 280,000 items. One reader-printer and two microfiche readers complete the facilities for consultation of this type of material.

Concerning computer facilities, the Unit now has three terminals and a small printer connected to two processing units and a main storage unit IBM 370/3083 model B24 - and IBM 370/3083 model K32) at the International Computing Centre, a United Nations agency in Geneva.

The audio-visual section of the Documentation Centre has two film projectors (a super 8 and a 16 mm), a slide tape carrousel, cassette readers and an overhead projector.

The Documentation Centre personnel consists of six professionals, five semi-professionals and two secretaries.

Standardization

Considering that standardization is of outstanding importance for the exchange of information, the IBE has always given attention to this activity by following, in the first place, the ISO (*) recommendations in the field of documentation and information. Compatibility with Unesco is also necessary in the context of Unesco's development of an integrated information system, and we have given much attention to this point, particularly in relation to the utilization of computers. In accordance with this point of view, the IBE adopted in 1979 the computer software developed by Unesco, CDS/ISIS, details of which are given in a separate document.

IBE Information services

8. Local services are provided to users of the Documentation Centre, the average number of utilizers being about six hundred a year. Our users are mostly postgraduate students, student teachers, professors or researchers. We also receive visitors from other international organizations and occasionally from other countries who spend a few days with us, or even weeks, to utilize our documentation resources. However a considerable amount of local services are provided to the IBE itself; all the bibliographies and quotations appearing in the IBE studies are checked and revised in the Documentation Centre. Bibliographical searches and other information work are produced in answer to requests from the Unesco Education Sector.

(*) International Organization for Standardization

A considerable part of the information work accomplished by the Documentation Centre is that addressed to Member States in answer to requests arriving by mail (letters, telex, telegrammes) or by telephone. To attend to these requests (an average of two thousand a year), the IBE sends bibliographical searches, computer searches and photocopies or microfiches. When a request is sent from a developing country, where local resources are not appropriate, the IBE, instead of providing a bibliography or a computer print, will provide a package of relevant documents. As a special service, the IBE regularly distributes books and documents in the field of education to educational documentation centres in developing countries. Small equipment, such as microfiche readers, card duplicators, etc., is occasionally donated to these documentation centres.

IBE Documentation and Information Unit Users

Who are the IBE information users? First to be mentioned are the IBE staff themselves, who receive documentation and information support in the course of their daily work. In particular, the IBE Publications Unit obtains a certain amount of work from the Documentation Centre, involving the verification of all the bibliographies and quotations appearing in IBE publications. Specialists of the Unesco Education Sector often request our services for the preparation of bibliographies, the carrying out of bibliographical searches or the processing by computer of reference works. Other Unesco educational agencies and international organizations occasionally request our services. Outside the international environment we have two major groups of users: students and professors at the Faculty of Education or other educational institutions in Geneva; local researchers and specialists from the surrounding geographical area or specialists passing through Geneva. The last and largest group consists of administrators, researchers, teachers, students, journalists, publishers, etc., who use our services by corresponding with us.

In 1984, the Documentation and Information Unit handled 1,330 information transactions. This figure is below the normal average, as the Documentation Centre was closed for three months from 1 June to the end of August due to a move to new premises. On this point, it should be noted that a great number of information requests involve very time-consuming bibliographical searches. The following tables will give an idea of the geographical origin of the requests received as well as the type of users.

	1983	1984
Distribution by geographical origin		
International	147	85
* Western Europe	578	423
Eastern Europe	96	109
Latin America	198	246
North America	78	88
Africa	185	157
Asia/Oceania	123	99
Arab States	109	114
Total	1514	1321

* The number of users in Western Europe includes local users.

Distribution by type of users		
Ministries of Education	30	65
Other Ministries	6	9
Teachers	76	41
Administrators	4	10
Students	240	149
Researchers	98	76
Doc. Centres/Libraries	420	435
Nat. Commissions/Perm. Delegations	30	17
Unesco HQ	34	39
Other Unesco	30	32
IGO's	109	61
NGO's	21	25
Universities	108	91
Publishers	16	7
* Others	289	264
Total	1514	1321

* Please note that the great number of 'others' refer to local users who did not fill out their statistical forms satisfactorily.

When answering questions, the Documentation Centre also provides books and documents, photocopies or microfiches, particularly to developing countries. In 1983, the total items distributed amounted to 7,839 and in 1984 to 17,826.

D - IMPACT OF PAST EXPERIENCE AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

9. Since 1978, the IBE in planning and developing its documentation and information services, has used the guidelines established by Recommendation 71. This same orientation should be taken into consideration for the future development of the Network.

The Recommendation emphasizes the principle of co-operation, as expressed in para. 1 (b):

> "Co-operative networking: in planning and developing an information system, one aim should be to share available resources by creating a network of centres and institutions with information services relevant to education."

This principle implies that all Network participants should be in a position to enable the sharing of their resources. This sharing requires the organization of resources, but unfortunately this is not always the case. A consequence is that to develop the Network, attention must be given to the improvement of infrastructures, particularly at national level. On this point, the Recommendation in its section Regional and international co-operation, para. 17 (c), notes that Member States should

> "develop adequate national infrastructures which would include mechanisms for regional and international linkage and information exchange to facilitate the country's participation in regional and international networks in the field of education."

Until now, the IBE has been unable to give much support to this aspect of INED's development, the main reason being that the IBE has no operational programmes and cannot provide experts, fellowships or equipment to Member States. The IBE has, for a certain number of existing educational documentation centres, assisted in the improvement of their collections by supplying relevant documents or very small equipment to develop their services. Another problem to be faced in a certain number of Member States is the absence of awareness regarding the importance of information in educational development. Consequently, very little use has been made of other opportunities such as those offered by the Unesco General Information Programme, bilateral co-operation, etc., for the improvement of educational documentation and information services.

10. Another important problem in developing countries is the training of specialized personnel to create and maintain educational documentation and information services. The IBE has received very few trainees for in-service training, those who have been sent being national personnel who received Unesco fellowships. For the next budgetary period, the IBE has requested resources for the organization of a three-week regional workshop for personnel of INED national centres, as a means of encouraging participation in the development of national infrastructures.

How could the IBE contribute to educational administrators' awareness as regards the benefits that good information services integrated into the education system may bring? Is the organization of regional workshops the most efficient way of contributing to the training of specialized personnel in developing countries?

---

11. To strengthen the Network, the IBE has published a directory of educational documentation and information services, in which appear all the institutions belonging to the Network, as well as the services they offer. The second Network tool is a newsletter which serves as a liaison bulletin, giving information on events related to institutions in the Network or to educational information in general. This IBE newsletter is distributed to all types of educational institutions around the world.

Is there any other type of publication which the IBE should produce in order to improve communication among the Network institutions or between them and the IBE?

---

12. Based on co-operation principles, the Network requires a decentralization of services so that participants at national, regional and international levels may fulfil a number of tasks according to their respective positions in the Network. At the national level, the INED focal points should: a) disseminate information on INED activities and services; b) adapt INED products to answer particular national needs; c) keep the IBE informed of relevant national documentation; d) inform the IBE of national events in the field of educational documentation and information; e) assist the IBE in identifying local resources of use in the conducting of other IBE activities (comparative studies, dissemination of publications, etc.).

What other activities might be suggested to national Network participants, particularly with a view to making INED information services better known at the national level? What should be the role of regional centres in the Network?

---

13. Regarding the role of the IBE in the Network, besides that of co-ordinator, we understand it to be that of a provider of information, particularly in matters pertaining to comparative education. However, it is not of interest to Member States nor to the IBE, to expand our services indefinitely, as we cannot, and should not, take the place of national services which have their own role to play inside the Network. The same may be said for the main providers of information at the national level.

Having enunciated this principle, we would like to ask the participants of this meeting to refer to the first part of this document, which describes our documentation resources and information services. These should be analysed with the objective of making a critical review of the present situation and giving us advice for the future implementation of the Network project.

Are the reference and bibliographical products issued by the IBE appropriate for the purpose of informing Member States? Which new activities would you recommend for the Network, and which should we exclude? Which types of support (electronic or other) should be used by the IBE for the transmission of information? What could be done to improve the utilization of the audiovisual collection?

---

14. There are numerous educational documentation systems and networks operational and under development in various countries and regions. In addition, a number of organizations and technical co-operation agencies are involved in setting up various kinds of education-related data bases and networks.

How can IBE relate more effectively to these efforts? Which are the other networks with which pilot efforts at closer co-operation should be explored? Should IBE have, as a long-term plan, interconnection by satellite, when possible, with these systems and networks for the sharing of data? Should IBE develop a system to share information through exchange of floppy discs with centres and networks where satellite communication is not feasible? Should IBE attempt (perhaps in co-operation with other interested organizations) to develop capacities of centres in its own network, for example to use micro-computers for control and sharing of information with IBE and with other centres in the network?

---

15. Of the moment, various categories of information are stored in the IBE data base. These range from information on books, Unesco documents and periodicals in the library (the library catalogue) to bibliographical items related to IBE publications, to abstracts of research and policy publications in Member States. The generation and storage of abstracts of significant educational material from Member States is the least developed aspect of the system.

To what degree should IBE place emphasis on collection and storage of abstracts? Which kinds of materials should receive priority for abstracting? Is it feasible to ask documentation centres in the network to prepare abstracts of significant publications in their countries and to move to a system whereby they put these on floppy discs which IBE can use to feed into the data base? Would centres in the network be willing to do this in exchange for information on floppy discs from other countries?

---

16. The kinds of computerized networking and sharing of information discussed in point 15, above, would imply that co-operating centres adopt a common system of abstracting and use compatible micro-computers, operating systems and floppy discs. This would also imply training of the staff to use the hardware and the systems.

To what degree would centres in INED be interested in developing such a system? To what degree would they need outside help in terms of financing of equipment and training? What funding agencies might be willing to co-operate with IBE in providing such support to develop the network along these lines?

---

17. Plans for the near future include the possibility of connecting the IBE computer facilities to Headquarters and to the International Institute for Educational Planning, with the idea of allowing the educational documentalists there to directly input information into the IBE data base and to draw on the IBE data base, as needed. There may be other data bases as well.

What kinds of Headquarters and IIEP documentation materials should be entered into the IBE data base? To what extent should the IBE data base be integrated into a common Unesco data base? What steps must be taken to move towards a system understood and used by clientele at Headquarters and IIEP? How can the master data base be made more 'user friendly' so as to attract users outside the organization?

---

18. After discussing many possibilities for improving IBE and Unesco Headquarters information and documentation services, it will be clear that, with limited resources, everything cannot be done at once.

What should be short-term, medium term and long-term priorities for further development of the services? What are the one or two things that should be placed high on the agenda for the immediate future?

Member States which have officially designated a national institution to participate in the activities of the International Network for Educational Information (INED).

Afghanistan
Algeria
Argentina
Australia

Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium
Brazil
Bulgaria
Burkina Faso
Burundi

Central African Republic
Chili
China
Colombia
Congo
Cuba
Cyprus
Czechoslovakia

Denmark
Dominican Republic

Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Ethiopia

Federal Republic of Germany
Finland
France

German Democratic Republic
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Guyana

Haïti
Hungary

Indonesia
Iraq
Ireland
Israel
Italy

Jamaica
Japan
Jordan

Kuwait

Lebanon
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Luxembourg

Madagascar
Malawi
Malaysia
Malta
Mauritius
Mexico
Monaco
Morocco

Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Niger
Nigeria
Norway

Pakistan
Panama
Papua New Guinea
Paraguay
Peru
Poland
Portugal

Republic of Cameroon

Republic of Korea
Romania

Saudi Arabia
Seychelles
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Swaziland
Switzerland
Syrian Arab Republic

Tunisia

Ukrainian SSR
USSR
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
* United States of America

Venezuela

Zaire

* No longer a Member State as from 1 January 1985.